

About the Film

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Wednesday, 12 November 2008 02:58 - Last Updated Monday, 02 July 2012 00:59



Four years in the making, "The Free China Junk" is a feature-length documentary. It represents a rare opportunity to capture the Free China story, a story whose back-drop in 1955 reflects the subtle relations between Communist China, Formosa (Taiwan) and the United States during this significant period in China's history. It is this moment in history that prompts the Free China's crew to make a critical choice: to stay in Taiwan or risk everything to cross the vast Pacific without sailing experience in the hope of tasting a new kind of freedom. With an invitation in hand to participate in a trans-Atlantic yacht race, they choose the ocean.

Director/Producer Robin Greenberg's inspiration to make the film evolved from research on her previous film "Huloo", about the remarkable life of T'ai Chi master and master mariner Loo-Chi Hu (Huloo), one of the Free China junk-mates. Upon meeting the other surviving crew in USA during 2006, she was amazed to learn the original 16mm footage (shot by junk-mate Calvin, former US Vice-Consul, Taipei) was in color. Combined with her own love of sailing and the ocean, she was determined to bring their collective story and epic voyage to light.

Robin was fortunate to have in-depth interviews with the four surviving junk-mates in California, as well as Huloo in New Zealand. Sadly, two of the junk-mates passed away before the completion of the film. "The Free China Junk" celebrates and immortalizes their collective story and audacious maritime achievement.

According to maritime historian and author, Dr. Hans Van Tilburg, the Free China junk is likely the oldest surviving wooden Chinese sailing junk. After years awaiting an uncertain fate at a shipyard in the Sacramento Delta, the junk was freighted back to Taiwan (April-May 2012) and is on display at the National Museum of Marine Science & Technology, Keelung. (Read more about preservation efforts at <http://www.chinesejunkpreservation.com>)

A short sequel film "The Return of the Free China Junk" is currently in production.